

To the Members of the California State Assembly:

I am returning Assembly Bill 2031, which is similar to a measure I vetoed last year (AB 880, Cohn), without my signature, as current law already requires counties to identify and locate family members when making foster care placements.

Working together, my Administration and the Legislature have taken action to improve the safety, permanency and well-being of children in California through the fundamental restructuring of Child Welfare Services. We secured a first of its kind federal waiver to provide counties flexibility to use federal funds on preventive services for families in crisis to keep children in safe and stable homes, and to reduce the need for foster care placement. With broad bipartisan support, we made a historic investment of \$255 million in the budget to promote successful transitions of former foster youth to adulthood, increase adoptions, and support the restructuring of the child welfare system and the provision of services to children and families that is linked to outcome improvements. Because supporting connections between children and youth in foster care and their relatives is an important goal, I signed legislation to expand the Kin-GAP program to enhance the ability of relatives to care for foster children, and supported requirements to promote and maintain supportive relationships between youth and their mentors, relatives and extended family members.

Counties have made significant progress in more effectively identifying and locating relatives of children and youth in foster care. The recent expansion of the KinGAP program and focus on improved outcomes will support continued improvements. These efforts will be monitored and supported by the California Child Welfare Council established by AB 2216 which I have signed into law. Given efforts to date, the soon to be created Child Welfare Council, California's national leadership in identifying relatives of children in foster care, and existing authority for the Department of Social Services to develop guidelines administratively, this bill is unnecessary.

For these reasons, I cannot support this bill.

Sincerely,

Arnold Schwarzenegger